Bangladesh Prime Minister on November 12, 2005 on the sidelines of the SAARC Summit held in Dhaka. SAARC related issue and bilateral issues relating to Indian Insurgent Group, transit, energy and water resources were discussed. Both sides reiterated the importance they attach to maintaining friendly and good neighbourly relations and reaffirmed their desire to continue discussions with a view to resolving outstanding issues.

Chinese arm supply to Nepal

2467. SHRI SHAHID SIDDIQUI: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether China is supplying large scale of arms to Nepal, if so, the details thereof;

(b) what would be the impact of such arm supplies by China to Nepal on Indo-Nepal relations; and

(c) the steps taken by Government to counter Chinese influence in Nepal?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMMED): (a) to (c) Government of India is aware of reports suggesting that Nepal has received arm supplies from China. The Royal Nepalese Army (RNA) spokesperson on November 25, 2005 said that RNA had recently received "non lethal" military assistance from China.

It has all along been the position taken by the Government of India that there is no purely military solution to the challenges facing Nepal, including the Maoist insurgency. The Government is constantly monitoring the situation and appropriate measures are being taken to safeguard India's national interests.

Portraying Kashmir as a country

2468. SHRI R.K. ANAND: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Voice of America's most trusted broadcasting corporation — portrays Kashmir as a country in its website;

(b) if so, whether any Indian monitoring agency has raised its objection; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI RAO INDERJIT SINGH): (a) No, Sir;

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

Missing Indian travellers gone to Pak

†2469. SHRI KALRAJ MISHRA: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that there is no trace of about forty six Indian travellers that boarded in the Caravan-e-aman bus which had gone to Pak occupied Kashmir from Srinagar;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the details of efforts made by Government to trace them?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMMED): (a) to (c) According to the latest information, 10 out of the 54 Indian nationals who had travelled abroad the Srinagar-Muzaffarabad bus (Caravan-e-aman) to Pakistan Occupied Kashmir are still stranded in PoK. Government is in touch with Pakistani authorities to facilitate their return.

Vacancies in passport offices

2470. SHRI K. CHANDRAN PILLAI: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether there are number of vacancies in different Regional Passport Offices in the country;

(b) if so, the number of such vacancies reported from various RPOs;

(c) whether it is a fact that the work in many RPOs are being offloaded to private parties;

(d) if so, the reasons therefor;

(e) the steps taken to fill the existing vacancies at the RPOs; and

(f) the details thereof?

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.